

HOFFMAN ESTATES PARK DISTRICT

SAFETY TRAINING BEST PRACTICES

The Hoffman Estates Park District recognizes that an effective training program can reduce the number of injuries, property damage, legal liability, illnesses, worker's compensation claims, and missed time from work. An effective training program can also assist trainers in keeping track of on-going training and annual re-training needs.

The Hoffman Estates Park District has developed an overall safety program including relative site specific safety information. The safety program covers but is not restricted to:

1. Accident prevention and safety promotion
2. Safety compliance
3. Accident and emergency response
4. Personal protective equipment
5. Safety practices
6. Equipment and machinery operations
7. Chemical and hazardous material safety
8. Workplace hazards
9. Employee involvement
10. Workplace operations
11. District policies and procedures
12. Emergency operations codes

The Hoffman Estates Park District maintenance division safety training program stresses a safety culture, beginning with a stretching program to start every day, time together after stretching to relay safety items and reminders, and to on-site visits and reinforcement of proper safety methods.

Safety training for the full-time staff begins in early January. A safety training sheet is prepared for each employee and each item sufficiently trained on is initialed and dated by the employee and the trainer. This serves as documentation the employee received proper training and understands the safety implications.

Non-English speaking employees receive bilingual training through interpreters, documentation and videos supplied by the Risk Management Agency PDRMA, by OSHA, and by several vendors that supply all that are needed for proper training.

Seasonal staff begin training in April and receive the same training sheets and supplies as the full-time staff. Some training can be more hands-on and on-the-job when better weather prevails.

Training is on-going throughout the season with refresher items repeated frequently (Three-points of contact, ergonomics, anti-idling, PPE, and daily equipment inspections to name a few.)

Violations of proper safety are dealt with immediately and on a personal basis, while several incidents of the same violation occurring with different employee will trigger a staff training session.

Supervisors are responsible for all training and it is at their discretion who they train to actively train in their absence. All paperwork and training sheets are the responsibility of the Division Director.

The following supervisor responsibilities are outlined but by no means are they inclusive. Training is the responsibility of everyone and must be an on-going process.

SUPERVISOR'S RESPONSIBILITIES

Turf Supervisor (Videos and Discussion)

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Statements of Admission 2. Emergency Ops Plan 3. Right-to-Know 4. Communicable Diseases 5. Harassment 6. Reasonable Suspicion 7. Emergency Codes 8. Hazardous Conditions 9. Safety Rules 10. Incident/Accident Reporting 11. Mandated Reporting 12. Patron Behavior 13. Lifting/Material Handling 14. Protective Personal Equipment 15. Time Clock Management 16. Stretching Procedures 17. Ergonomic Checklist 18. Proper Walking/Working on Ice Procedures 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 19. In-Ground Irrigation 20. Toro Groundsman 21. Unique Rake 22. 580 Mower 23. 325 Mower 24. Z-Turn Mower 25. Walk Behind Mower 26. Push Mower 27. Weed Whips 28. Leaf Blower 29. Sidewalk Edger 30. Hand Tools 31. Seed-a-Vator 33. Three-points of Contact
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Construction Supervisor

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Jack Hammer 2. Table Saw 3. Portable Circular Saw 4. Concrete Saw 5. Sawz-All 6. Jig Saw 7. Router 8. Drill Press 9. Hand Belt Sander 10. Transit 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Mitre Saw-Ryobi 12. Mitre Saw – Master Force 13. Scaffolding 14. Band Saw 15. Portable Grinder 16. Ladders
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Horticulture Supervisor

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tree Planting Procedures 2. Pruning Procedures 3. Shrub Planting Procedures 4. Gas Hedge Trimmers 5. Gas Pole Pruners 6. Chipper 7. Stump Grinder 8. Prescribed Burn Procedures 9. Roto-Tiller 10. Chain Saw Procedures

Mechanic Supervisor

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mowing Trailers 2. Construction Trailers 3. Misc Equipment Trailers 4. Gas/Chemical Storage 5. Gas Pump Operations 6. Dump Truck Operations 7. Vehicle Check Rides 8. Parts Washer 9. Brake Cleaner Machine 10. Tire Machine 11. Oil Dispensers 12. Air Lines 13. Battery Charger/Jumper 14. Shop Exhaust System 15. Changing Oil Barrels 16. Oil Drain Cart 17. Orbital Polisher 18. Floor Jack 19. Mobile Lift 20. Chain Hoist 21. Bearing Press 22. Wheel Balancer 23. Truck Mounted Winch 24. Cutting Torches 25. Combo Plane 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 26. Air Tools 27. Walk Behind Snow Blowers 28. Pick-up Truck w/Snow Plow 29. Salt Spreaders 30. Big Dump Snow Plow 31. Personal Man-lift 32. Trailer Man-lift 33. Generators 34. Chain Saw Sharpener 35. Mower Blade Sharpener 36. Bench Grinder 37. Air Compressor 38. Water Pumps and Trucks 39. Defensive Driving 40. Skid Loader w/ forks 41. Skid Loader w/bucket 42. Skid Loader w/auger 43. Tractors 44. Tractor w/forks 45. Backhoe 46. Backhoe w/forks 47. Portable Irrigation 48. Power Washer
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Buildings and Aquatics Supervisor

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lock-out Tag-out 2. Confined Space 3. Respirator 4. Fire Extinguishers 5. Power Rodder 6. Chlorine Safety 7. Acid Safety 8. Chemical Training 9. Slide Maintenance 10. Pool Pump Start-up 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 11. Back Washing 12. Pool Vac 13. Pool Vac w/robot 14. Irrigation Start-up 15. Irrigation Blow-out 16. RPZ Removal 17. RPZ Installation 18. Valve Removal 19. Valve Installation 20. Alarm Procedures
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Several local park districts and agencies were queried as to their safety training methods and ideology. Every agency polled agreed that safety has to be a number one priority and training has to be in the forefront constantly. Training sheets, videos, hand-outs and bilingual training are the norm, as well as inviting outside agencies such as PDRMA to schedule on-site training and reinforcement.

A few agencies had designated trainers that handled all the training, while others separated their training and had certain individuals within their expertise to provide training.

The Hoffman Estates Park District maintenance division's training lies in the latter category. Supervisors of each department within the division handle their skill set and share the training throughout the division. Once again it has to be stressed that training is not just restricted to each supervisor's department, it is a division- wide operation and is an on-going, every day process. Peer to Peer reinforcement is critical in sustaining an effective training program especially when the majority of the crew works off site and out of the watchful eye of management.

References:

1. Chris Pekarek – Golf Course Superintendent - Village Links of Glen Ellyn
2. Pete Meyers – Park Superintendent – Bolingbrook Park District
3. Bill Ryder – Athletic Director – DeKalb Park District
4. John Karesh – Superintendent of Parks and Operations – Woodridge Park District
5. PDRMA Publications
6. OSHA

Hoffman Estates Park District

Safety Inspection Best Practices

Facility and park safety inspections are mandated by our Risk Management carrier PDRMA to identify and reduce safety and health hazards that could contribute to employee injury or illness or endanger the health and welfare of our users.

By process of phone conversations and a short email questionnaire we were able to ascertain several industry standards followed by a majority of our peers.

PDRMA recommends" creating a system for identifying and evaluating workplace hazards, including periodic inspections to identify unsafe conditions and unsafe work habits."

The Risk Manager has developed a Parks Division inspection program that is designed to insure high risk areas receive periodic attention.

Supervisors, or their designated representatives, schedule, conduct, and document safety inspections in all work areas under their jurisdiction to identify and reduce physical and/or environmental hazards that could contribute to injury or illness.

Safety inspections are classified as: 1) Informal, 2) Formal, and 3) Special

1. Informal Inspections

Informal inspections are performed on a continuous basis. Supervisors or leads conduct informal inspections when they visit a worksite, park or playground and discuss their findings in regularly scheduled safety meetings.

In the course of normal activities all employees should be aware of their surroundings and report and correct discrepancies.

Informal inspections can be conducted with a minimum of documentation but all deficiencies need to be documented with steps taken to rectify the situation. Dates of corrections made should be noted.

2. Formal Inspections

Formal inspections are scheduled park or playground inspections that must be documented, including the specifics of an observed hazard and dates by which the hazard will be corrected.

Opinions differ on frequency of formal inspections but not less often than once a year is a standard. Bi-yearly inspections were the norm. Several districts mentioned monthly inspections of first aid kits and weekly inspections of food service areas, as well as vehicle inspections.

3. Special Inspections

Special inspections are performed in response to reports of alleged unsafe acts and/or conditions. This may also be in conjunction with an accident investigation. Documentation is necessary.

Responsibility for inspections primarily goes to: 1) Supervisors and 2) Leads

Each supervisor or lead is responsible for his/her work areas and should monitor conditions to ensure informal and informal inspections are conducted.

Inspection guidelines were mentioned with the majority of the districts when conducting an inspection:

1. Use checklists.
2. Prepare an inspection sequence and schedule.
3. Ask employees for input.
4. Document hazards.
5. Non-serious hazards corrected as soon as possible.
6. Serious hazards corrected immediately.
7. Prepare a written report.

Hoffman Estates Park District follows a similar inspection criteria schedule as most of the districts polled with the following exceptions:

1. No district mentioned electronic inspections using tablets in the field to reduce the time spent and paper waste connected with manually filling out paper work in the field, then entering it into computer forms and spreadsheets. Hoffman Estates Park District uses tablets that inspectors sign out and take into the field to record their inspections. The information is immediately entered into the data base and stored in inspection form. Additionally the inspections are available in real time on all supervisors' desk top computers. Savings are noticed in time and less paper waste.
2. One other district surveyed appears to schedule formal inspections as much as Hoffman Estates Park District.

The Hoffman Park District formal inspection schedule:

Yearly Inspections – Fire Alarms
Playground Audits

Bi-yearly -	Ballfields	Soccer Fields
	Bleachers	Tennis Courts
	Boat Docks	Grounds
	Garage Doors	Landscaping
	Paths and Trails	In-line Hockey

Monthly -	Park Buildings
	Lake Fountains
	Playgrounds
	Splash Pads
	Skate Park

Weekly - Pools
Soccer Goals
Vacant Buildings (Winter months)
Vehicles

Daily - Ice checks (In season)
Sled Hill checks (In season)
Man-lifts (before and after usage)
Buses (Pre-post trip)
Work Areas (30- second walk through)
Vehicles and equipment (Pre-post usage)

Sources:

1. Keith Gorcyka – Streamwood Park District
2. William Ryder – DeKalb Park District
3. Mike Farmer - Glen Ellyn Park District
4. Dave Figgins – Prospect Heights Park District
5. Carl Gorra – Naperville Park District
6. Todd Gully – Buffalo Grove Park District
7. Gary Jordan – Warrenville Park District
8. Ken Mrock – Chicago Bear Football Club
9. Robert Strickler – Darien Park District
10. Bill Wolsfeld – Wheaton College

HOFFMAN ESTATES PARK DISTRICT

NATURAL AREA MANAGEMENT BEST PRACTICES

Many of the properties owned by the Hoffman Estates Park District contain sections that are naturalized areas. These areas are comprised of one or more types of natural areas; wetland, woodland, or prairie.

A natural area is defined by the National Park Service as:

“an area that visually exhibits primarily non-human created qualities, such as an urban forest or wetland.”

Plant management in the District's natural areas is the greatest challenge faced by the staff. Each site has its own characteristics and predisposition. The District's initial approach is general and intended to control the predominant problem of invasive undesirable plants. After 2-3 years of following the basic practices each site will be re-evaluated to identify issues. A site specific management practice will then be developed to address remaining issues and specific site objectives.

In the wetland areas woody plants, reed canary grass, phragmites, and purple loosestrife are the major unwanted plants to be addressed. The general practice and approach would be to:

- 1.) Burn the wetland preferably in the fall or spring prior to green up.
- 2.) Introduce desirable species of plants immediately after the burn.
- 3.) Unwanted woody plants that survive the burn should be removed by cutting.
- 4.) Remaining stumps and stems should be treated with a non-selective herbicide in order to kill roots and prevent re-growth.
- 5.) Where practical invasive species should be killed in place with an aquatic use approved non-selective herbicide.
- 6.) The area should be monitored, evaluated, and have results documented.

In our woodland areas Buckthorn, Japanese Honeysuckle, Multi-Flora Rose, and garlic mustard are the major undesirables. These are understory plants that shade out native forest floor fauna that itself creates a barren soil, susceptible to erosion. The general practice and approach would be:

- 1.) In the fall, after leaf drop, burn the woodland. If the woodland is open enough for grass to grow it may be possible to burn in the spring.
- 2.) Introduce desirable species of plants immediately after the burn.
- 3.) Mechanically remove undesirable trees and shrubs that do not respond the fire.
- 4.) After mechanical removal treat remaining stumps and stems with a non-selective herbicide to prevent re-growth.
- 5.) Monitor the area, evaluate, and document results.

Illinois prairies were once a mix of numerous species of forbs and grasses. Today undesirables such as crown vetch, Bull thistle, Canadian thistle, teasel, and canary grass dominate our landscape. The general practice and approach for prairies would be:

- 1.) Burn. Where warm season or native grasses dominate, a fall burn is preferred.
- 2.) Introduce desirable species of grass immediately after burn.
- 3.) Unwanted woody plants that survive the burn should be removed mechanically.

- 4.) Treat remaining stumps and stems with a non-selective herbicide to prevent re-growth.
- 5.) Use appropriate herbicides to kill herbaceous plants that do not respond to fire.
- 6.) Monitor the area, evaluate, and document the results.

Each park in the district is unique in design and utilization. The same can be said for the naturalized areas within them. The District utilizes the concept of "maintenance modes" for its turf management which refers to "the way of maintenance" ranging from most intense to least intensive. Modes 1,2,3, address the manicured turf areas in the parks. Modes 4, 5, and 6 address the management of the naturalized areas.

Mode 4 – Naturalized Area

Priority One naturalized areas have been rehabilitated by park's personnel and undergo a year round management plan to assist them in thriving. The plan consists of burning every year for three years then every third year after that when conditions allow, or a yearly mowing, herbicide treatments when needed to eradicate invasive species, manual weeding of various undesirable and invasive plants, and the introduction of new plant material.

Mode 5 – Naturalized Area

Priority Two naturalized areas have been rehabilitated by park's personnel and left to regenerate on their own. The management plan for these areas consist of burning when conditions allow, yearly mowing, herbicide treatments when needed to eradicate invasive species, and manual weeding of various undesirable and invasive plants.

Mode 6 – Naturalized Area

Priority Three naturalized areas are natural areas that have not been developed, changed or altered by recent human activities. The management plan consists of burning when conditions allow, mowing and herbicide treatments when necessary to eradicate invasive species.

Once the District's Management Practices have begun, it will take 3 to 5 years for a show of native flowers and grasses to bloom. To maintain recovery it will require the continued monitoring and application of management tools to the site.

This is commonly referred to as "stewardship".

We are presently in the process of maintaining our existing naturalized areas and restoring those that are evaluated as recovering. Our process is a continuous effort and each existing and new park areas are evaluated for naturalization.

Several park districts we contacted by either email correspondence or phone conversation mirrored our basic maintenance practices of either burning on a yearly basis or mowing natural areas annually. The re-seeding of areas immediately after burning or mowing was replicated and the use of pesticides for undesirable weed and shrub control was on par with our methods.

One area that we differed with the other districts was in our "mode" listings of our parks and natural areas. The other parks treat all their natural areas the same and do not give a priority as far as intensive treatment or on the other side, less intensive treatment.

All parties agree that on one hand natural areas can save time and money in maintenance in some areas (namely equipment and fuel costs) but can at times be somewhat labor intensive. We have found that conducting prescribed burns with a select crew allows our other employees to spend more time on other activities (bed and tree maintenance and manicured areas).

The naturalization of our shorelines has helped us to eliminate the need for line trimming and costly riprap repair and this sentiment was echoed by the other districts that maintain natural areas.

It appears after contacting our fellow districts and in speaking with them that we are one of the leaders in naturalization maintenance.

References:

1.) Carl Gorra – Park Operations Manager, Naperville Park District
2.) Dave Margolis – Natural Resource Manager, Oswegoland Park District
3.) Mike Siefken - Grounds Supervisor, Downers Grove Lyman Woods and Belmont Prairie
4.) Jeff Mecher – Superintendent of Parks, Frankfort Square Park District

Best practices study playground equipment procurement study

Background The Hoffman Estates Park spends between \$350,000 and \$500,000 annually on playground renovations and /or upgrades. A substantial portion of this expenditure is for the purchase of playground equipment from leading manufactures. Deciding what equipment and from whom the purchase is made has been an important part of the planning process. Because not all equipment is the same in quality or play value, competitively bidding has been a difficult and some cases less than a fair proposition. To better understand how other districts deal with this situation, staff conducted a survey of how playground equipment is identified an ultimately purchased within their respective districts.

Implications The following summarizes the responses received in the survey:

Playground Procurement Survey		2013 -2014					
Agency	9 Districts responded						
Contact person	Gary Buczkowski, Hoffman Estates Park District		Phone	847-561-2172			
	Please forward a summary of this survey to my e-mail			Gbuczkowski@heparks.org			
1	Does your agency limit the number of playground venders to be considered as part of the process? N/A 2			Yes	<input type="text" value="5"/>	No	<input type="text" value="2"/>
	If Yes , check reasons for doing so						
		Quality manufacturing and design		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="6"/>		
		Customer service		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="5"/>		
		Warranty		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>		
		Aesthetic considerations		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>		
		Same source as other playgrounds already within your agency		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>		
		Maintenance serviceability		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="6"/>		
		Green initiatives		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="1"/>		
2	Does your agency competitively public bid and directly purchase playground equipment from manufactures ?			Yes	<input type="text" value="2"/>	No	<input type="text" value="6"/>
	(RFP process: price is set and all vendors generate a design based on that price. Proposals then evaluated on quality and play value)						
	If yes , how does your agency insure that the final purchased product is of similar quality and play value?						
		Pre -qualifying manufactures / then lowest bid price.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>		
		Pre -qualifying manufactures along with specific plans / then lowest bid price.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="2"/>		
		Lowest sealed bid price / staff review after bids are received.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>		
		Lowest sealed bid price /Committee review after bids are received.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>		
		Other	<hr/>				
	If no , how does your agency insure that the final purchased product is of similar quality, play value and greatest \$ value for your community ?						
	(Designer determines basic components & design guidelines, vendors submit designs/costs. Staff limits presentation to public based on cost & design RFP evals. Public view designs at meeting, selct choice & designer. Staff negotiates and changes/board approves & order placed)						
		Designer determines manufacture and playground plan and includes it as part of the installation package which is then competitively bid.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>		
		Staff & public determines manufacture and playground plan and includes it as part of the installation package which is then competitively bid.		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value="3"/>		
		Elected officials determines manufacture and playground plan and includes it as part of the installation package which is then competitively bid.		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="text" value=""/>		

	If no , do the bids your agency receives for installation contain line item costs?	N/A 2	yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	5	No	<input type="checkbox"/>
	(Line item for entire renovation (demo, curb, equip, site amen, surfacing. Equip lump sum item)						
			If yes, has there ever been an instance where the bidder has marked up the cost of supply of playground equipment?	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	1	No <input type="checkbox"/>
	(PD purchases equipment from vendor, no markup. Contract is only to install.)						
	(Bidders cost for equipm is to supply and install. Mark up generally 25% or more from Manufact price)						
			What is the average cost you would expect to have your playground installed for?			30-40	% of PG material cost
	(Staff installs) N/A 2						
3	On average what does your agency expect to pay for playground equipment materials only / per site (No installation \$ included)						
				Average	Median		
	(Varies by park. Budget for entire renovation/2 PG per year.			\$44,000	\$39,000	<i>Neighborhood playground</i>	\$28,000-50,000+85,000-90,000
	How much of budget amt goes into equip is subject to what needs to be done at Local.If infrastructure is good and few site amen are needed, more money available for new equipment)			\$46,000	\$50,000	<i>School Site Playground</i>	\$45,000-82,000
						<i>n/a 4</i>	
				\$91,000	\$86,000	<i>Community Playground</i>	\$70,000-125,000
						<i>n/a 2</i>	
4	Playground manufactures involved within your district (within the last five years)						
				Included in process	Awarded contracts	Included in process	Awarded contracts
	Berliner		X			XXXXXX	XXXXXXXX
	Burke		XXX	XXX		XXXXXX	XXXXXXXX
	Gametime		XXXX	XXXX		XXXX	XX
	Gbig toys		X			XXX	X
	HAGS		X	X		XXXX	XXXXXXXX
	Kompan		XX	XXX		XXXX	XX
	Krauss Craft		X				
					Other		

Of the 9 district's that responded, the majority (6 of 9) do not publicly bid the supply of playground equipment. In most cases staff negotiated with playground vendors to get as much value for the budgeted dollars available. The final design was then made part of the installation contract and the actual purchase was made by the playground installer. While the district got exactly what it wanted in the way of play value and performance, it may not have been at the least price possible. Along the same thought process, some districts accepted designs from prequalified vendors based on a set spending limit. With all designs costing the same, the differential was the design itself. Vendors were encouraged to provide as much as possible and provide interesting fun elements as part of their design submissions. Because of unique variations between vendors, design quantitative evaluation methods were not feasibly employed as a method for identifying the best design. In most cases committees were formed to choose the winning design. Involvement of committees and in particular community members lengthened the procurement process time. Most of these districts who utilize this method spend the spring and early summer identifying the playground equipment. Bid installation is in the summer and installation of the playground(s) is in the fall of each year. This timing may or may not have cost implications to the overall project based on contractor workloads and inventory of outstanding work on the books. We know from past experience that there is the most competition for work prior to the beginning of each construction season.

As for dollars spent on equipment, the majority of district's budget more procurement of playground equipment than does Hoffman Estates. In particular more is spent on theming elements than on actual play features.